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REMARKS

Claims 1-8, as amended, remain herein.

Claims 1 and 2 have been amended to recite that the outer pan, the inner pan and the upper lid are made of a ceramic material. See the specification at page 11, lines 6-8, and page 21, lines 1-3 for support.

The Abstract has been amended.

1. The specification has been revised to delete the reference numeral "15" from pages 17 and 21, consistent with the drawings, and to correct a typographical error on page 21.

2. Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Takeda U.S. Patent 5,287,798. The claims as amended patentably define thereover.

The cooking double boiler of claim 1 includes an outer pan having an upper aperture and a bottom portion for holding water, an upper lid for covering the upper aperture, and an inner pan including a flange that is located in the interior of the outer pan, wherein the outer pan, the inner pan and the upper lid are

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made of a ceramic material. The outer pan includes a peripheral edge portion that supports the flange of the inner pan, the peripheral edge portion having an inner side including a plurality of concave portions for directing generated water vapor upward from water in the inner pan, wherein the upper lid is supported by the peripheral edge portion of the outer pan at outer peripheral positions of the concave portions for sealing the water vapor in an upper portion of the inner pan. This arrangement is nowhere disclosed or suggested in the cited reference.

Takeda '798 discloses a cooking double boiler; there is no mention of the makeup of the outer pan, the inner pan and the upper lid. In contrast, applicant's double boiler includes an outer pan, an inner pan and an upper lid made of a ceramic material. The specific material of a double boiler is not mere choice of design because the choice of material determines whether the double boiler can cook certain foods effectively without destroying or substantially degrading them. See applicant's specification, page 2, last paragraph, through page 3, first paragraph, describing convection problems occurring when liquid

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soymilk is heated to become tofu because of undesirable coagulation during heating. As a result of natural coagulation when heating such liquid food, heat is not conveyed evenly throughout the viscous, thickened food. This uneven heating results potentially in food burning against the bottom surface and sidewalls of the inner pan of the double boiler, and forming a boundary layer of low heat transmission coefficient in the vicinity of such surfaces, which prevents uniform heating throughout the soymilk. Excessively heated portions of the soymilk under such conditions cause curded portions to become porous, i.e., undesirable "blow holes" formed by upwardly bubbling vapor are formed in the coagulating soymilk/tofu. All these conditions are caused by non-uniformity of heating throughout the food as a result of rapid heat transfer from the bottom surface and side walls of the inner pan affecting some portions of the food, while more central portions are insulated by the food itself. Heating at lower temperatures does not solve this problem, because the same uneven cooking persists, but at a slower rate and for a longer time, which results in excessive drying of the tofu and other problems as tofu is formed from the soymilk.

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Takeda '798 does not identify the problem being solved by the presently claimed invention, and does not disclose or suggest making the inner pan and the upper lid of a ceramic material, or that it would have been desirable or beneficial to use a ceramic material. Also, Takeda '798 does not describe any aspect of the Takeda '798 double boiler structure that would function the same way as a boiler made of ceramic components. Accordingly, Takeda '798 does not disclose or suggest all of the elements of applicants' claim 1.

The cooking double boiler of claim 2 is the same as that recited in claim 1, except that instead of concave portions for directing generated water vapor, the double boiler includes vapor spouts operable between open and closed positions and located between the peripheral edge portion and the flange of the inner pan. This arrangement is nowhere disclosed or suggested in the cited reference.

All embodiments of the Takeda '798 double boiler include steam paths 8, which are always open, and not operable between open and closed positions. Takeda '798, Figs. 2 and 7, are cross-sectional views of the double boiler, showing movement of

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steam shown by arrows along steam paths 8. Column 3, lines 1-4, describes Fig. 6, showing no steam path 8 and no such arrows passing upward into the inner pan, simply because Fig. 6 is a cross-sectional view of the double boiler taken at a point that does not show an aperture for allowing steam to travel along steam path 8, as shown in Fig. 3. Accordingly, Takeda '798 does not disclose vapor spouts for directing generated water vapor operable between open and closed positions, as recited in applicants' claim 2.

For the foregoing reasons, Takeda '798 fails to disclose all elements of applicants' claimed invention, and therefore is not a proper basis for rejection under §102. Claims 3, 4, 7, 8, which depend from claim 1, are allowable for the same reasons explained herein for claim 1, and claims 5 and 6, which depend from claim 2, are allowable for the same reasons explained herein for claim 2. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

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All claims 1-8 are now proper in form and patentably distinguished over all grounds of rejection stated in the Office Action. Accordingly, allowance of all claims 1-8 is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action by the applicants would be desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone applicants' undersigned representatives.

Respectfully submitted,

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